

Submitter: Ron Brocklehurst  
On Behalf Of: ASPIRE  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5525

Good morning. My name is Ron Brocklehurst. I have had the honor, and privilege, to be an ASPIRE mentor for the past 9 ½ years, first at Newport High School, then at Toledo High School. I have mentored approximately 500 high school students during my 9 ½ years. I normally mentor groups of 3-7 kids at a time for about 12 hours per week.

As a mentor I see the profound impact that ASPIRE has on these kids. Many of these small-school students have no idea of what their options are once they graduate from high school. Hearing from their ASPIRE mentors that they can join the military, go to a trade school, community college, or to a university opens their eyes. "I'd like to go to college, but I can't afford it" is a standard comment that I hear. ASPIRE and OSAC helps provide my response – "If you want to go to college, let's find a way to make it happen!"

I have many friends and clients (I am a CPA) that live in California. They are astounded when I tell them about ASPIRE. Many of them pay large sums of money to mentors (usually former school counselors or teachers) to do for their kids exactly what ASPIRE does for free for our kids. Plainly put, ASPIRE is changing these kids' lives.

I'd also like to add that the dedication of the ASPIRE coordinators that I have worked with (Melinda Dye and Jen Hamilton) both humble and inspire me to do more for these kids. These two amazing human beings are, in my opinion, under-appreciated and under-paid. They both have my respect and admiration.

In closing, please hear my plea to keep the ASPIRE and OSAC programs alive and prospering.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by Ron Brocklehurst.

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